

Making the Leap to Middle School



For most students, middle school marks a big transition from elementary school. Since several elementary schools feed into one middle school, the middle school is larger than most elementary schools. Some classes may be quite large as a result. However, students' friends generally move with them to the same middle school.

In middle school, subjects are taught in distinct periods. Unlike elementary school, where many classes are self-contained and most students remain with one teacher for a good part of the day, middle school students are expected to change classes and teachers with almost every new subject. Thus, the first few days can be confusing as new students learn to follow their new schedules. Elementary schools try to prepare students for the transition by having fifth graders change classes for different subjects. Some middle schools try to help as well by having teams of teachers remain with the same groups of students throughout the year.

Middle school also differs from elementary school in the choices it gives students over some classes in their schedules. For example, middle schoolers are often able to choose among some elective classes, such as music and art. Grades become increasingly important, and middle schoolers have more homework than is given to elementary school students.



Art is an elective in middle school.

Along with the responsibility of additional homework, middle schoolers are often given more opportunities to participate in extracurricular activities. In contrast to elementary schools, which may have limited activities, middle schools offer a wide variety of team sports, clubs, and activities for students to enjoy after school. These differences, while important, enable students to prepare for their next transition – to high school.

Limiting a Ruler

Have you ever dreamed about life in a kingdom? Many people do. They wonder what life would be like living under the rule of a king or queen.

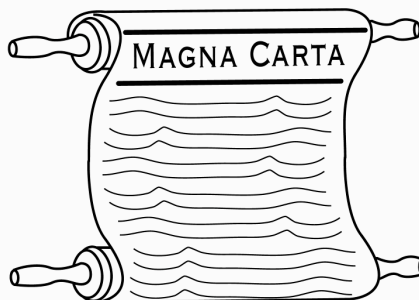
Believe it or not, many countries still have kings or queens ruling their nations. England, for example, is still ruled by a royal family. However, the ruler's power over England is limited. The ruler must answer to a group of representatives that make up England's Parliament.

The change that limits England's rulers came about because of a document known as the Magna Carta. Magna Carta is Latin for "great charter." A charter is a document that outlines the rights of the people. It is like a set of laws that everyone must obey. Under the Magna Carta, limits were placed on the king or queen. The charter gave more power to citizens through their representatives in the Parliament.

The Magna Carta was written because of a greedy ruler, King John. This unfair ruler disliked the rich landowners of England. To punish them, he continually raised taxes. When the people could not afford the extreme taxes, King John took their land away. Since King John controlled the courts, the people could not hope to regain their property.

Then, the situation worsened when England went to war with France. King John lost much of the land held by the English in France. This enraged the landowners who owned the land King John lost. It also angered the common people of England who depended on the landowners for jobs.

In order to save what was left of his kingdom, King John agreed to live by the sixty-three articles in the Magna Carta. It forced the king to seek the permission of the landowners before raising taxes. It also gave the Church freedom from the king's rule. As a result of the Magna Carta, a king or queen in England can act only with the consent of Parliament.



<p style="text-align: center;">Reading Mini-Assessment Grade 5 LA.A.2.2.7 Compare/Contrast & LA.E.1.2.3 Sim/Diff Form C</p>

Name _____ **Date** _____

Directions: Read the article “Making the Leap to Middle School”, then circle the letter of the correct answer.

1. How does classroom instruction change for students after they enter middle school?
 - A. Students change classes and teachers for most subjects.
 - B. Friends are generally grouped together in the same class.
 - C. Students remain with one teacher for a good part of the day.
 - D. Extra-curricular activities are more important than classroom instruction.

2. According to the article, what is one way that elementary schools and middle schools are ALIKE?
 - A. Both allow students to choose their classes.
 - B. Both give students equal amounts of homework.
 - C. Both offer students a wide variety of team sports.
 - D. Both try to help students with the transition to middle school.

Directions: Read the passage “Limiting a Ruler”, then circle the letter of the correct answer.

3. What remained the SAME about the royal family after the Magna Carta?
 - A. They still ruled over England.
 - B. They held the same amount of power.
 - C. They continued to ignore the rights of the people.
 - D. They continued to raise taxes without permission.

4. How was life DIFFERENT for the landowners after the Magna Carta was written?
 - A. King John took away the land they still owned.
 - B. Taxes on their land were increased to punish them.
 - C. Their approval was needed before taxes could be raised.
 - D. England went to war with France and they lost their land.

5. In what way did King John’s authority change after the Magna Carta?
 - A. King John was given the power to rule over the Church.
 - B. The Magna Carta forced King John to continually raise taxes.
 - C. The Magna Carta placed limitations on the power of King John.
 - D. King John was permitted to rule without the consent of Parliament.

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Answer Key – Making the Leap to Middle School/Limiting a Ruler

LA.A.2.2.7: The student identifies similar or dissimilar elements within or across texts or identifies how elements are alike or different within or across texts.

LA.E.1.2.3: The student identifies an explanation or analysis of similarities or differences among characters, within one character over time, between settings, or between events in one or more texts.

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